

## Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

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1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:  
dividing a set of target devices to which a message is targeted into ~~a number of~~  
subsets of target devices, wherein a [[the]] subset to which a particular device belongs is  
determined based on an identifier of the device and the number of subsets of target  
devices; and

A'  
varying a [[the]] timing with which the message is communicated to the  
respective subsets of target devices.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein determining the  
subset [[a set]] of target devices to which the message is targeted comprises:  
broadcasting the message over a network;  
receiving one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the  
network;  
estimating a number of devices coupled to the network; and  
determining a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated  
number of devices coupled to the network.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein determining the subset ~~[[a set]]~~ of target devices to which the message is targeted comprises:

- multicasting the message to a subset of a network;
- receiving one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;
- estimating a number of devices in the subnet; and
- determining a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

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4. (Currently Amended) An article comprising a machine-accessible medium to provide machine-readable instructions that, when executed, cause one or more electronic system to:

divide a set of target devices to which a message is targeted into ~~a number of~~ subsets of target devices, wherein a ~~[[the]]~~ subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an identifier of the device and the number of subsets of target devices; and

vary a ~~[[the]]~~ timing with which the message is communicated to the respective subsets of target devices.

5. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 4 wherein the ~~sequences of~~ instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset ~~[[a set]]~~ of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

broadcast the message over a network;  
receive one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;  
estimate a number of devices coupled to the network; and  
determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

6. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 4 wherein the ~~sequences of~~ instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset ~~[[a set]]~~ of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

- multicast the message to a subset of a network;
- receive one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;
- estimate a number of devices in the subnet; and
- determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

7. (Currently Amended) An electronic data signal embodied in a data communications medium shared among a plurality of network devices comprising sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause one or more electronic systems to:

- divide a set of target devices to which a message is targeted into ~~a number of~~ subsets of target devices, wherein a ~~[[the]]~~ subset to which a particular device belongs is

determined based on an identifier of the device and the number of subsets of target devices; and

vary a a [[the]] timing with which the message is communicated to the respective subsets of target devices.

AI 8. (Currently Amended) The electronic data signal of claim 7 wherein the sequences of instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset [[a set]] of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

broadcast the message over a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;

estimate a number of devices coupled to the network; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

9. (Currently Amended) The electronic data signal of claim 7 wherein the sequences of instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset [[a set]] of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

multicast the message to a subset of a network;  
receive one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;  
estimate a number of devices in the subnet; and  
determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

10. (Original) A method comprising:

A'  
dividing a set of target devices to which a message is targeted into multiple subsets of target devices, wherein the subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an identifier of the device; and

varying a the timing with which the respective subsets of devices respond to the message.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein determining the subset [[a set]] of target devices to which the message is targeted comprises:

broadcasting the message over a network;  
receiving one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;  
estimating a number of devices coupled to the network; and  
determining a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein determining the subset [[a set]] of target devices to which the message is targeted comprises:

- multicasting the message to a subset of a network;
- receiving one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;
- estimating a number of devices in the subnet; and
- determining a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

A1. 13. (Currently Amended) An article comprising a machine-accessible medium to provide machine-readable instructions that, when executed, cause one or more electronic system to:

- divide a set of target devices to which a message is targeted into multiple subsets of target devices, wherein the subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an identifier of the device; and

- vary a [[the]] timing with which the respective subsets of devices respond to the message.

14. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 13 wherein the ~~sequences of~~ instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset [[a set]] of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

- broadcast the message over a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;

estimate a number of devices coupled to the network; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

15. (Currently Amended) The article of claim 13 wherein the ~~sequences of~~ instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset [[a set]] of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

multicast the message to a subset of a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;

estimate a number of devices in the subnet; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices in the subnet.

16. (Currently Amended) An electronic data signal embodied in a data communications medium shared among a plurality of network devices comprising sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause one or more electronic systems to:

divide a set of target devices to which a message is targeted into multiple subsets of target devices, wherein the subset to which a particular device belongs is determined based on an identifier of the device; and

vary a [[the]] timing with which the respective subsets of devices respond to the message.

17. (Currently Amended) The electronic data signal of claim 16 wherein the sequences of instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset [[a set]] of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

broadcast the message over a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices coupled to the network;

estimate a number of devices coupled to the network; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number of devices coupled to the network.

18. (Currently Amended) The electronic data signal of claim 16 wherein the sequences of instructions that cause the one or more electronic systems to determine the subset [[a set]] of target devices to which the message is targeted further comprises sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause the one or more electronic systems to:

multicast the message to a subset of a network;

receive one or more responses to the message from target devices of the subnet;



estimate a number of devices in the subnet; and

determine a number of subgroups based, at least in part, on the estimated number  
of devices in the subnet.

19-24. (Withdrawn)

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**AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:**

The attached sheets of drawings are formal drawings of Fig. 1-4. These sheets of formal drawings replace the original sheets, which included informal drawings of Fig. 1-4. No substantive new matter has been added.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets with Fig. 1-4